

Shared Visions Preschool Grants

Overview

Iowa Shared Visions Preschool programs were established in *Iowa Code* in 1987 and include:

- High quality child development programs for children ages three to five years of age who are at high risk for later success in school and life for families who have an income below 130 % of the poverty level;
 - Collaborative partnerships between local Community Empowerment Area Boards, Head Start, child care, and school districts in 51 Iowa counties;
 - A high level of accountability, documents success, documented extensive data collection, a history of established programming in the community with highly trained staff; and
 - Programming in diverse setting to support community need and family choice
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Funding

In 2005-2006 state funding was \$6,887,531 and provided 109 Preschool grants supporting 112 classrooms for children three-to-five-years of age. Services were provided to 2,322 children.

- The number of children served had decreased the past 3 years. In 2005 the legislature allocated funds for preschool programming support for low-income families. Local empowerment boards allocated some of these funds to Shared Visions Preschool. At this time 1,645 eligible children are still on the waiting list.
 - The state funding only supports half of the actual expenses needed to keep programs operating at this time.
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Indicators of Quality

What are the research-based indicators of quality for parent support programs?

Primary indicators of quality child development programs include the education level of the teacher, goal-oriented curriculum, systematic assessment, and national accreditation of the program.

- Shared Visions preschool programs are **accredited** by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), an accreditation process that demonstrates a high standard of quality and developmentally appropriate practices.
 - About 69 percent of Shared Visions preschool teachers have a four-year degree with the majority of the **teachers holding a degree in early childhood education**. In 94 of the 112 classrooms at least one degreed teacher is present. The remaining 27 % of teachers report attaining an Associates of Arts (AA) degree in early childhood education or a Child Development Associate (CDA).
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Comprehensive Core Curriculum

Well-articulated curriculum guides teachers to provide children with experiences that foster growth across a broad range of developmental and content areas. At this time, 85 percent of the programs reported using a standardized, goal oriented curriculum.

The Department of Education allocated federal grant funds to provide training in several standardized curriculum during the past two years. As a result of this effort, 13 % fewer preschool programs report using a locally developed curriculum in favor of a standardized curriculum.

Systematic Child Assessment

Systematic assessment of the children is essential in assisting teachers in planning appropriately challenging curriculum and tailoring instruction that responds to each child's strengths and needs. Currently, 97% of the preschool programs report using a standardized assessment instrument to measure child outcomes and plan core curriculum and instruction.

Results

Research indicates:

Shared Visions graduates' later performance in school

- ***Kindergarten Readiness*** – Shared Visions graduates met or exceeded kindergarten teachers' performance expectations in reading, writing, and problem solving (Zan & Edmiaston, 2000).
 - ***Academic performance*** – Over 80% of the Shared Visions graduates were rated at or above average in reading and writing at the end of kindergarten (Zan & Edmiaston, 2000).
 - ***Special Education Referrals*** – Fewer than 8% of Shared Visions graduates were receiving special education services by the end of kindergarten (Zan & Edmiaston, 2000).
 - ***Long-term Effect*** – Second grade teachers rated Shared Visions graduates higher on internal assets, including positive values, social competencies, and positive identity, than children who did not participate in Shared Visions programs (Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education, 2000, unpublished data).
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Supporting Early Care, Health, and Education Results

Shared Visions Preschool grantees contribute to the results of Iowa's Early Care, Health, and Education system.

- **Children Ready to Succeed in School:**

- Shared Visions graduates met or exceeded kindergarten teachers' performance expectations in reading, writing, and problem solving
- Over 80 % of the Shared Visions graduates were rated at or above average in reading and writing at the end of kindergarten (Zan & Edmiaston, 2002).
- Fewer than eight percent of Shared Visions graduates were receiving special education services by the end of kindergarten.

- **Healthy Children**

- About 92 % of the children have health insurance. This is an increase of thirty-five percent since 2004.
- Ninety-nine % of the children attending Shared Visions Preschools are appropriately immunized. This represents a 13 percent increase.

- **Secure and Nurturing Child Care Environments:**

- Shared Visions Preschool programs are accredited by the National Association of Young Children the national standard of highest quality early childhood programs strive to achieve.
 - Many programs are participating in the Department of Human Services Quality Rating System.
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Shared Visions Parent Support Grants

Overview

The Parent Support programs include:

- Family support programs for high-risk children in approximately 15 Iowa counties (for families with incomes below 130% of the poverty level). Some grantees serve multiple counties;
- Twelve grantees located in area education agencies, public schools, Head Start and private non-profit agencies;

Parent Support Programs

Indicators of Quality

What are the research-based indicators of quality for parent support programs?

- Services provided pre-natally or at birth;
- Early and continuing assessment to identify families who are most in need of services and to link families with appropriate services;
- Information to assist families in accessing a medical provider to assure optimal health and development;
- Services that acknowledge and are respectful of each family's cultural and ethnic background;
- Services that are voluntary and use positive, persistent outreach efforts to build family trust;
- Opportunities for families to enhance their parenting skills, knowledge, and understanding of educational and developmental needs of their children; and
- Qualified staff.

The Shared Visions Parent Support Programs Address these Indicators in the Following Ways:

The teachers of the Shared Visions Parent Support Programs provide:

- Services to children and their families pre-natally or as soon as the child is eligible. The Parent Support Program may provide services to multiple children in a family.
- Developmental screening to determine if a child is at risk for a disability and to link families with appropriate resources to address the growth and development of their child.
- Resources to help families provide health insurance, immunizations, and other medical and dental services for their child through programs such as HAWK-I, Child Health Specialty Clinics and other public health clinics.
- Home visiting, children's play groups, and parent education meetings to address the needs of each family and honor their cultural and ethnic background. Staff provided a total of 39,000 hours of service. The average time families received services ranged from six months to twenty-six months.
- Trusting and respectful relationships that build upon each family's strengths. Many families are supported in furthering their education and find employment. subsidies



- Parent Support Programs connect families with resources to support childcare such as subsidies from the Department of Human Services.
- Materials and resources that assist families in enhancing their parenting skills and promote positive interactions between the parent and child are provided.
- All but one support staff holds at least an Associates of Arts degree in early childhood education, social services, or nursing. About 86 % of the staff holds a Bachelor of Arts with two individuals holding masters degree.

Results of Shared Visions Parent Support Programs

Healthy Children

- At least 96 % of the children participating in the Shared Visions Parent Support programs received all of their immunizations. Approximately 1,284 or 94 % of the children served had health insurance. In 2005 only 87 % of the children served had insurance.

Safe and Supportive Communities

- Shared Visions Parent Support Programs report a decrease in the percentage of children experiencing abuse and neglect

Secure and Nurturing Families

- Shared Visions Parent Support Programs report decreases in domestic and family violence.
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